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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Friday May 19, 2006

For Information Contact Public Affairs

SANDY RAYNOR

Telephone: (602) 514-7625

Cell: (602) 525-2681

# **BUS COMPANY OWNERS & MANAGERS PLEAD GUILTY AND ARE SENTENCED IN ILLEGAL ALIEN SMUGGLING & EMPLOYMENT CASE**

TUCSON, Ariz. – The U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Arizona, announced today, Gustavo Arellano-Ibarra, also known as Gustavo Arellano, 36, of Phoenix, Arizona, was sentenced to 53 months and 9 days imprisonment, by United States District Judge Raner C. Collins in Tucson. Arellano-Ibarra pleaded guilty to two felony counts for harboring and transporting illegal aliens for the purpose of commercial advantage and private financial gain during his employment as the Phoenix bus terminal manager for the Golden State Transportation Company from May 1998 to December 2001.

During his employment with Golden State, Arellano-Ibarra admitted to harboring and transporting hundreds of illegal aliens using Golden State's facilities. Arellano-Ibarra, an illegal alien himself, also faces deportation proceedings.

On May 10, 2006 Francisco Gonzalez, age 63, of Orange County, California, pleaded guilty to a charge of aiding and abetting the fraudulent use of a Social Security Account Number. (SSN) Francisco Gonzalez was the Vice President of Operations for Golden State and the founder of the company. The individual who used the fraudulent SSN was Gustavo Arellano-Ibarra. Francisco Gonzalez was sentenced to twelve months supervised probation, ordered to perform 150 hours of community service, ordered to repay the costs of court-appointed counsel and fined \$7,000.

Four other members of the ownership and control group of Golden State also pleaded guilty to criminal charges on May 11<sup>th</sup>. Antonio Gonzalez, 43, of Orange County, California, the former president of Golden State, pleaded guilty to being an accessory after the fact to transporting an illegal alien, and to engaging in a pattern and practice of continuing to employ an illegal alien. Antonio Gonzalez was sentenced to twelve months supervised probation, ordered to perform 200 hours of community service and ordered to repay \$7,000 towards the costs of his court-appointed counsel.

Also on May 11, 2006, Enrique Gonzalez, 39, Ismael Gonzalez, 35, and Irene Coronado, 33, each of Orange County, California, entered guilty pleas to engaging in a pattern and practice of continuing to employ an illegal alien. Each of these three defendants has six months to complete 100

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hours community service. If successful and there are no further legal violations, the charges on Enrique, Ismael and Irene Gonzalez will be dismissed. Francisco and Antonio Gonzalez's charges will not be dismissed.

This case was initially indicted on December 10, 2001. Indicted as defendants were Golden State Transportation, the Gonzales family members who owned and controlled the company and approximately 30 other defendants who either were managers of bus terminals, terminal employees or alien smugglers from Los Angeles, Tucson and southern Arizona. Each defendant was charged with conspiracy to commit alien smuggling, bringing in, harboring and transporting aliens through the bus company. Subsequent superseding indictments added money laundering and other charges. Criminal forfeiture of assets was also sought in the indictment. The district court case had been stayed since December 2003 pending the decision of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals regarding the suppression of wiretap evidence.

Previously, Golden State pleaded guilty to the conspiracy and several alien smuggling felonies as well as money laundering charges. The company forfeited to the United States its new bus terminal located near downtown Phoenix which was to have begun operations in early 2002 and which had been appraised at \$2,500,000. The company also forfeited more than \$100,000 cash seized during the execution of search warrants. Golden State has since ceased its operations.

A Tucson jury convicted Juan Garcia-Jaramillo of smuggling charges in a January 2005 trial. In December 2005, another Tucson jury convicted Garcia-Jaramillo of another alien smuggling event. Additionally, three managers of the company's terminals in Las Vegas and Tucson have pleaded guilty as well as three Tucson area smugglers. Several additional terminal employees have pleaded guilty to various charges. Finally, several Tucson and Los Angeles based alien smugglers fled after the indictment and have been forced to go underground for the last four and one half years to avoid arrest. As part of their plea agreements with the government, the remaining charges were dismissed as to the defendants who have been sentenced.

"The corrupt business model for the Golden State Transportation Company was dependent on the criminal smuggling of thousands of illegal aliens into the United States," said Julie L. Myers, Department of Homeland Security Assistant Secretary for Immigration and Customs Enforcement. "The success of this investigation sends a strong message that the Departments of Justice and Homeland Security are committed to dismantling criminal organizations involved in human smuggling. ICE is focused on targeting the infrastructure and networks that support this illegal activity in our communities."

The investigation in this case was conducted by the United States Border Patrol, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Social Security Administration Office of the Inspector General. The prosecution was handled by Wallace H. Kleindienst, Special Assistant U.S. Attorney, and Danny N. Roetzel, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Tucson.

CASE NUMBER: CR-01-01696-TUC-RCC

RELEASE NUMBER: 2006-078(GoldenState)